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This study was conducted by Macomb County Community College to determine the reasons that their students withdrew from classes. Questionnaires were sent to 3,568 students who had dropped a total of 6,081 courses. The 1,434 responding students (40.19%) answered questions about the 2,190 courses they had dropped, and gave their reasons for doing so. It was found that most students withdraw from only one course (average number of courses dropped = 1.53), and that age, sex, or number of courses taken does not seem to be related to withdrawal. Multiple reasons were often given, the most common being: (1) job conflict, (2) lack of interest, (3) wrong program, (4) academic difficulty, and (5) conflict with the teacher. Early identification of students who withdraw, and more vigorous counseling efforts are recommended. (MC)

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WHY STUDENTS DROP COURSES

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

The study was made to determine student reasons for withdrawing from classes. Questionnaires were sent to 3,568 students who had withdrawn from 6,081 courses. Of this number, a total of 1,434 students answered questions about 2,190 courses and gave their reasons for withdrawing. It was found that most students withdraw from one course. A student's sex and age have no bearing on his withdrawing, nor does his being a part-time or full-time student seem to have any influence. Multiple causation is often present. Those reasons that seem to be most influential are combinations of personal and academic reasons. The five most common reasons given, though, were: job conflict, lack of interest, wrong program, academic difficulty, and conflict with the teacher.

PROBLEM

In the spring semester of 1968, a total of 3,568 students withdrew from 6,081 courses. (In this study withdraw refers to the act of officially dropping a course any time after the student officially enrolled in that course.) At the same time the campus enrollment was 10,398, not including the students in the 12-week semester for the Division of Industrial Technology.

The college needs to know why these students withdrew from the courses. The reasons for the withdrawals could point to ways of reducing this withdrawal rate. Reducing this rate can be economical not only in dollars but in human energy. Also, it is not safe to assume that all students who withdrew from courses do not have the ability to succeed in those courses. It is probable, too, that with extra help some of those students who withdrew from courses might succeed in courses more basic than the usual introductory courses. Other students may be able to be salvaged if they are given help that is other than academic.

The first objective was to pose all of the questions that the study should try to answer. These questions were then narrowed to five general questions:

1. What kind of a student withdraws (age, sex, part-time or full-time)?

2. When do students withdraw?

3. Is there any significance between ACT or SCAT-COOP scores and withdrawals?

4. Are some courses withdrawn from more often than others?

5. Why do students withdraw from courses?

Then a pre-coded questionnaire was designed to answer these questions. The problem was making it as complete as possible yet making it as brief and as simple as possible (see Appendix A). If the student withdrew from one course, he was sent one copy of Form A. If the student withdrew from two courses, he was sent two copies of Form A. If the student withdrew from three or more courses, he was sent one copy of Form B. This last step was taken because it was felt that the student was actually beginning to withdraw from a significant part of his program. It was also assumed that few students would be very responsive to receiving six or seven questionnaires, if that many courses had been dropped. When these questionnaires were returned the responses were then duplicated on copies of Form A. This means, then, that a student who withdrew from six courses now had a questionnaire for each course.

The names of these students were obtained from the Records Office. As the green drop-slips were returned to that office from Data Processing they were sent to the researcher, who made a copy of the name, student number, date, address, and courses dropped. The drop-slips were then returned to the Records Office.

Mailing the questionnaires started when the final date of withdrawal had passed and all of the drop slips had been processed. This occurred on June 1, 1968. Addressed, stamped envelopes were included. The last of the questionnaires were mailed on July 9, 1968. This was a time-consuming task because only two people did the mailing and questionnaires were sent to all students who officially withdrew from any course at any time after they had officially enrolled.

When the questionnaires were returned the next task was started. Since the students' names were not on the questionnaires, it was necessary to locate them by their student numbers. This was simplified by dating the questionnaires and coding them according to whether the secretary or the researcher sent them out.

This rather intricate device was needed so that the test scores could be added to the questionnaires as they were returned (see Appendix B). The test scores used were those scores that were used by the college for admittance information. These scores were taken from the official records supplied by the Records Office.

The questionnaires, with attached test scores, were then key-punched and sent through a card sorter to answer the questions found in Appendix C. Many of these questions were those same questions asked prior to designing the questionnaires. This was completed by mid-November.

RESEARCH RESULTS

What kind of student withdraws?

During the spring semester of 1968 a total of 3,568 students officially withdrew from 6,081 courses. Questionnaires were sent to all of these students. Out of that number, 1,434 students returned questionnaires that accounted for 2,190 of the courses. This return, then, accounts for 40.19% of the students and 36.01% of the courses. This study is based on that return.

Those 1,434 students withdrew from one to eight courses. An analysis of the number of courses dropped can be found below.

Distribution of the Number of Courses Dropped

number of courses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
number of students	962	309	86	47	21	7	1	1

Table 1

The chart shows that the greatest number of students who withdrew from courses, withdrew from one course. The mean number of drops was 1.53 courses.

The number of students who responded to the questionnaire can also be analyzed in terms of sex and whether they were full-time or part-time students.

Distribution by Number of Courses (in pct.)

Type of student	Categories							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
male FT n=489	65.24	18.81	5.72	5.72	3.27	1.02	0.20	0.20
male PT n=393	69.72	20.36	7.63	2.04	0.25	--	--	--
female FT n=213	64.32	24.88	5.63	2.82	0.94	0.94	--	0.47
female PT n=264	70.08	25.000	4.17	0.76	--	--	--	0.38

Table 2

Legend
n=number of students
FT=Full-time student
PT=Part-time student

Also, according to the registration figures, of the total enrollment 9,273 were males and 3,032 were females. (This includes the 12-week Technical courses.) This gives a total enrollment of 12,305. Looked at another way, 75.36% were males, and 24.64% were females. Of those who responded to the questionnaire 477, or 35.11%, were females, and 882, or 64.88%, were males.

In order to put the above figures in a truer perspective, it is necessary to mention the Technical division. Of the 1954 students who enrolled in 12-week courses, 1942 were males and only 12 were females. This tends to skew the figures. So, for all other divisions, the percents were: 70.80% were males and 29.20% were females. Of those who responded to the questionnaire 64.88%, or 882, were males, and 35.11%, or 477, were females. This shows the withdrawal rate to be within about 6% of the enrollment figures for each sex.

This same kind of analysis must also be done in terms of those who withdrew from a course or courses and were either part-time or full-time students. In terms of the total enrollment figure of 12,305 (prior to the dates for changing or withdrawing from classes) there were 6,394 who were full-time students and 5,911 who were part-time students. However, in the 12-week Technical courses there were only 106 full-time students out of 1954. This means, then, that 1,848 were part-time students

Again, subtracting these Technical figures may give a clearer picture of what is taking place generally at Lacon. The enrollment figure for all other divisions was 10,351. This shows that 62.12% of the students were full-time students and 37.88% were part-time students. Now of those who returned the questionnaires 702 or 51.66% were full-time students and 657 or 48.34% were part-time students.

As should be expected, most of the students who returned questionnaires were in the 18-22 year-old bracket: 78.2% were in that bracket. The rest of the students' ages ranged from 23 to 54 years of age.

When Do Students Withdraw?

Most students who withdrew from courses do so according to the significant dates listed in the catalog. The dates ranged from January 2 to May 30.

DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER AND DATES ON WHICH STUDENTS WITHDREW

01/02-1	02/29-36	04/11-32
01/04-8	03/01-7	04/15-2
01/10-1	03/02-2	04/16-2
01/15-5	03/04-10	04/18-10
01/17-1	03/05-12	04/22-44)
01/19-1	03/06-10	04/23-34) Mid
01/22-8	03/07-14	04/24-36) term
01/23-1	03/08-11	04/25-70) week
01/25-1	03/09-1	04/26-105)
01/26-16	03/11-37	04/27-2
01/29-8	03/12-8	04/29-22
01/31-1	03/13-31	04/30-16
02/01-14	03/14-14	05/01-5
02/02-5	03/15-2	05/02-14
02/05-5	03/18-20	05/03-16
02/06-2	03/19-27	05/06-9
02/07-9	03/20-7	05/07-18
02/08-6	03/21-20	05/08-14
02/09-24	03/22-11	05/09-15
02/12-32)	03/23-1	05/10-20
02/13-46) 1st week	03/25-14	05/13-28
02/14-44) of	03/26-8	05/14-13
02/15-586) classes	03/27-29	05/15-16
02/16-22)	03/28-17	05/16-12
02/17-9	03/29-15	05/17-1
02/18-1	03/30-8	05/18-1
02/19-55) extension	04/01-40	05/20-25)
02/20-147) of	04/02-86	05/21-22) last week
02/21-15) change	04/03-34	05/22-37) of
02/22-10) of	04/04-50	05/23-29) withdrawals
02/23-11) elections	04/05-28	05/24-37)
02/24-5	04/08-7	05/27-4
02/26-9	04/09-2	05/29-2
02/27-22	04/10-23	05/30-1
02/28-39		

Table 3.

Is there any significance between ACT or SCAT-COOP scores and withdrawals?

MEAN SCORES OF STUDENTS WHO DROPPED COURSES
SPRING, 1968

Entrance Test		Categories*						
		One n=332	Two n=106	Three n= 26	Four n= 13	Five n= 6	Six n= 2	Seven n= 1
SCAT	Verb.	44.36	41.79	51.65	35.85	40.33	51.50	43
	Quant.	46.44	36.25	45.88	47.00	50.50	58.50	59
	Total	42.14	36.82	44.81	37.54	43.17	51.00	43
COOP	Vocab.	42.32	42.00	45.88	40.69	36.00	49.50	53
	Speed	37.11	34.92	49.84	39.54	38.50	36.50	77
	Express	28.86	25.65	28.04	24.54	14.33	12.50	41
		n=301	n= 96	n= 24	n= 12	n= 11	n= 1	n= 1
A.C.T.	Eng.	31.15	26.29	27.54	33.67	21.82	12.	.02
	Math.	28.31	25.40	25.67	34.75	28.18	29.	.01
	Soc.St.	36.51	31.28	40.75	34.92	23.00	43.	.01
	Nat.Sci.	31.88	31.81	32.67	39.17	31.91	28.	.02
	Comp.	28.63	25.08	29.42	35.92	22.55	26.	.01

Table 4

Legend:
n=number of subjects
Categories refers to the number of courses withdrawn from.

Whether a particular student took the SCAT-COOP tests or the ACT test seems to have no bearing on his withdrawal because the mean scores are relatively high.

Are some courses withdrawn from more than others?

COMPARISON (IN PCT.) OF WITHDRAWAL RATES BY COURSES

Course *	% of those who withdrew	6081 % of total of courses withdrawn from	2190 % of total of courses in questionnaires
ACC 110	17.36	0.82	2.28
ACC 111	21.74	0.49	1.36
ACC 211	10.00	0.33	0.91
ACC 90	7.54	0.32	0.91
ART 101	11.11	0.28	7.78
ART 131	2.34	0.05	0.14
ART 140	5.56	0.03	0.09
ART 191	2.80	0.07	0.18
ART 211	12.90	0.07	0.18
ART 231	6.66	0.03	0.09
ART 292	5.40	0.03	0.09
AST 100	5.64	0.12	0.32
AST 101	6.25	0.03	0.09
BIO 100	8.52	0.64	1.78
BIO 110	7.81	0.08	0.23
BIO 120	7.33	0.18	0.50
BIO 131	4.76	0.01	0.05
BL 110	5.96	0.36	1.00
BL 111	1.94	0.04	0.14
CHEM 103	14.56	0.24	0.68
CHEM 104	16.90	0.20	0.55
CHEM 107	17.78	0.13	0.36
CHEM 210	11.11	0.01	0.05
CHEM 99	9.86	0.24	0.68
COM 160	4.31	0.32	0.91
DIT 100	10.66	0.13	0.36
DP 101	4.19	0.12	0.32
DP 102	1.88	0.01	0.05
DP 201	6.90	0.06	0.18
DP 203	6.06	0.03	0.09
ECON 100	4.95	0.08	0.23
ECON 101	6.24	0.56	1.55
ECON 102	15.88	0.72	2.01

Course*	% of those who withdrew	6081 % of total of courses withdrawn from	2190 % of total of courses in questionnaires
EDT 100	5.00	0.03	0.09
EDT 101	19.04	0.06	0.18
EDT 105	2.74	0.03	0.09
EDT 110	6.45	0.03	0.09
EGR 110	7.92	0.13	0.36
EGR 111	9.62	0.08	0.23
EGR 120	10.00	0.03	0.09
EGR 121	12.00	0.04	0.14
ENG 104	14.81	0.13	0.36
ENC 105	6.19	0.12	0.32
ENG 110	12.42	2.22	6.16
ENG 120	11.98	2.45	6.80
ENG 190	10.52	0.03	0.09
ENG 210	7.14	0.03	0.09
ENG 231	9.30	0.46	1.28
ENG 232	9.93	0.44	1.23
ENG 240	2.86	0.02	0.04
ENG 244	6.45	0.03	0.09
ENG 245	3.17	0.03	0.09
ENG 246	17.39	0.32	0.91
ENG 257	20.00	0.12	0.32
ENG 50	9.56	.46	1.28
ENG 60	9.21	0.12	0.32
ENG 70	5.26	0.06	0.18
ENG 90	11.42	0.41	1.14
ENG 91	45.45 (Cancelled section)	0.24	0.68
FR 101	12.28	0.12	0.32
FR 102	13.40	0.21	0.59
FR 202	11.76	0.03	0.09
FR 90	23.53	0.06	0.18
GAT 170	2.94	0.02	0.05
GB 150	7.13	0.74	2.05
GEOG 101	11.36	0.67	1.87
GEOG 211	6.84	0.08	0.23
GEOG 252	2.70	0.02	0.05
GEOL 102	3.70	0.02	0.05

Course*	% of those who withdrew	6081 % of total of courses withdrawn from	2190 % of total of courses in questionnaires
GER 101	9.30	0.06	0.18
GER 102	7.69	0.13	0.36
GER 90	7.14	0.02	0.05
HIS 101	12.39	0.71	1.96
HIS 102	3.63	0.18	0.50
HIS 113	4.34	0.02	0.05
HIS 249	9.68	0.39	1.10
HIS 250	7.29	0.23	0.64
HUM 150	1.47	0.02	0.05
HUM.160	5.86	0.41	1.14
ILT 101	1.52	0.02	0.05
ILT 102	3.70	0.02	0.05
ILT 104	11.54	0.04	0.14
MAT 101	2.86	0.03	0.09
MAT 102	6.98	0.10	0.27
MA 100	20.09	1.44	4.02
MA 101	10.60	0.12	0.32
MA 102	43.75	0.12	0.32
MA 111	16.22	0.10	0.27
MA 115	22.94	0.41	1.14
MA 116	6.93	0.12	0.32
MA 118	13.90	0.85	2.37
MA 155	12.92	0.31	0.87
MA 156	8.82	0.14	0.41
MA 257	5.56	0.03	0.09
MA 258	6.25	0.03	0.09
MA 260	9.09	0.04	0.14
MA 90	11.92	0.64	1.78
MGMT 101	5.30	0.10	0.27
MKTG 101	4.27	0.08	0.23
MKTG 102	1.28	0.02	0.05
MKTG 202	12.82	0.04	0.14
MUS 102	20.00	0.06	0.18
MUS 120	13.79	0.13	0.36
MUS 121	23.80	0.08	0.23
MUS 131	6.80	0.23	0.64
MUS 136	5.56	0.03	0.09
MUS 137	4.76	0.02	0.05
MUS 138	28.57	0.06	0.18

Course*	% of those who withdrew	6081 % of total of courses withdrawn from	2190 % of total of courses in questionnaires
MUS 150	25.00	0.04	0.14
MUS 151	15.38	0.03	0.09
MUS 180	14.28	0.02	0.05
MUS.235	8.83	0.04	0.14
MUS 271	21.05	0.06	0.18
MUS 280	40.00	0.03	0.09
NAT SCI 150	10.39	0.13	0.36
NAT SCI 160	5.15	0.36	1.00
NR 210	6.25	0.02	0.05
NR 212	6.25	0.02	0.05
OO 110	2.92	0.12	0.32
OO 180	7.76	0.14	0.41
OO 181	7.86	0.12	0.32
OO 182	8.57	0.20	0.55
OO 183	8.59	0.18	0.50
OO 184	10.60	0.12	0.32
OO 185	7.24	0.08	0.23
OO 275	10.00	0.03	0.09
OO 280	1.78	0.02	0.05
OO 284	2.50	0.02	0.05
OO 285	12.76	0.10	0.27
OO 287	14.28	0.10	0.27
OO 288	7.69	0.06	0.18
OO 290	7.58	0.08	0.23
OO 291	14.28	0.06	0.18
OO 291A	16.00	0.06	0.18
OO 294	5.00	0.02	0.05
ORI 160	8.43	0.59	1.64
PE 100M	7.27	0.39	1.10
PE 101W	16.03	0.34	0.96
PE 114AG	4.00	0.02	0.05
PE 114AT	7.41	0.06	0.18
PE 114SM	9.72	0.12	0.32
PE 114SW	2.67	0.03	0.09
PE 114M	9.34	0.16	0.46
PE 114 MD	13.46	0.12	0.32
PE 114 W	100.00(Cancelled section(s))	100.00	0.18
PE 114WT	3.84	0.04	0.14
PE 114RS	20.78	0.25	0.73
PE 185	9.09	0.08	0.23
PE 200	100.00(Cancelled section(s))	0.04	0.14

Course*	% of those who withdrew	6081 % of total of courses withdrawn from	2190 % of total of courses in questionnaires
PHIL 201	6.99	0.16	0.46
PHIL 205	8.87	0.36	1.00
PH SCI 101	10.18	0.44	1.23
PH SCI 102	3.75	0.04	0.14
PHY 125	11.11	0.03	0.09
PHY 245	7.14	0.03	0.09
PHY 99	10.16	0.10	0.27
PSY 101	6.38	1.52	4.25
PSY 210	2.17	0.02	0.05
PSY 215	6.45	0.03	0.09
PSY 220	5.46	0.36	1.00
PSY 230	4.83	0.31	0.86
PSY 240	2.27	0.04	0.14
PS 100	7.00	1.24	3.47
PS 140	4.22	0.04	0.14
PS 160	2.82	0.03	0.09
SIT 101	21.56	0.18	0.50
SOC SCI 150	1.45	0.02	0.05
SOC SCI 160	4.78	0.36	1.00
SOC 100	6.68	0.80	2.24
SOC 103	13.45	0.49	1.37
SOC 245	2.56	0.02	0.05
SOC 275	9.52	0.03	0.09
SPA 101	12.82	0.08	0.23
SPA 102	4.42	0.41	0.23
SPA 90	12.90	0.06	0.18
SP 100	7.72	1.05	2.92
SP 210	5.68	0.08	0.23
SP 220	2.40	0.03	0.09
SP 240	15.00	0.04	0.14
SP 280	7.69	0.06	0.18
SUM 1012	28.57	0.06	0.18
SUR 201	3.70	0.02	0.05
SUR 202	3.33	0.02	0.05

Course*	% of those who withdrew	6081 % of total of courses withdrawn from	2190 % of total of courses in questionnaires
All 12-week Tech classes	15.25	4.90	13.61
MEAN	10.72	0.24	0.68
RANGE	1.28 to 100	0.01 to 100	0.04 to 7.78

Table 5

* Course code may be found in the Spring Schedule of Classes for 1968.

Even though the range is very wide, no department seems to have a significantly greater number of students withdrawing from its courses in comparison to the number of students taking courses in that department. Invariably when the withdrawal rate is rather high, it is because at least one or more sections were cancelled. These, however, are noted in Table 5. Certain departments do, though, come consistently closer to the mean than others.

Why do students withdraw?

Since the questionnaires allowed students to give as many as four reasons out of 17 reasons (see Appendix A), the four reasons most often given in each of the four positions are in the following table:

HIERARCHY OF REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

	Reason	
Most Important Reason	Job conflict	n = 467
	Wrong program	n = 253
	Section was cancelled	n = 231
	Academic difficulty	n = 207
		Total= 1158

Table 6A

Second Most Important Reason	Job conflict	n = 217
	Lack of interest in subject	n = 198
	Wrong program	n = 129
	Academic difficulty	n = 122
		Total= 666

Table 6B

Third Most Important Reason	Lack of interest in subject	n = 123'
	Job conflict	n = 87
	Conflict with teacher	n = 71
	Academic difficulty	n = 59
		Total= 340

Table 6C

Fourth Most Important Reason	Lack of interest in subject	n = 15
	Hadn't satisfactorily completed the course or courses required for this course	n = 9
	Financial problem	n = 6)
	Job Conflict	n = 6)
	Conflict with teacher	n = 6)
	Military	n = 5)
	Section was cancelled	n = 5
		Total = 52

Table 6D

n = number of questionnaires that had that particular response. This number does not refer to the number of students because some students are represented by more than one questionnaire.

Just by looking at the various numbers and totals of responses in the above four tables, one can begin to see that a student doesn't drop for one reason necessarily, but that he may have several reasons for withdrawing.

By computing the number of responses for any given reason, regardless of whether or not it is in the hierarchy in the various tables, the reasons and their positions change again.

DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL

Job conflict	n = 777
Academic difficulty	n = 388
Wrong program	n = 382
Lack of interest	n = 336

Table 6E

n = number of questionnaires that had that particular response. This number does not refer to the number of students because some students are represented by more than one questionnaire.

Of the reasons immediately above, one may be deemed personal and the other three may be deemed academic. Even though job conflict was the most common of all responses, the other three most common responses are other than personal, in fact, academic, and outnumber the most common one by roughly 1.5 to 1.

The fourth most common response is of course indicative of an attitude or attitudes.

When asked what their attitudes were toward the course or program, they responded as follows:

DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDES (in Pct.)

Responses	Pct.
No response	16.35
I liked it very much	16.51
I liked it	33.26
I was indifferent about it	23.50
I disliked it	7.87
I disliked it very much	2.51
Total	100.00

Table 7

This looks admirable when one considers that 49.77% said they either "liked it very much" or "liked it"; and in terms of those who responded, the percentage for those two responses would be even higher. Other judgments and conclusions can be reached by looking at four pieces of data at one time: the reasons for withdrawal, the student's attitude, his rating of his academic standing, and his rating of his relationship to his teacher or teachers.

COMPARISON OF REASON TO ATTITUDE, CLASS STANDING, AND STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP.

Reason	Attitude	Class Standing	Student/Teacher Relationship
Job Conflict 777*	251	114	264
Lack of Interest 493*	382	163	260
Wrong Program 412*	219	79	165
Academic Difficulty 392*	200	103	157
Conflict with Teacher 261*•	124	57	154

Rated as 3, 4 or 5 in question-naire

Rated as 4 or 5

Rated as 4, 5, or 6

Table 8

*These figures reflect the total number of responses for these particular reasons.

•This reason was added to the chart because the reason, even though it was not one of the four occurring most often, the number of responses to it did put it in fifth position. This response helps demonstrate the point in the following paragraphs.

Table 8, as well as Tables 6A-6E, begins to suggest multiple causation for withdrawing. For instance, the student who says he withdrew because of a job conflict could very easily have had an attitude not conducive to college work. He could also have a low academic standing and a weak relationship with his teacher. All of these factors seem to be playing a part in students' reasons for withdrawal.

It is interesting to examine the figures in Table 8 for Academic difficulty. Of the 392 responses to this item 200, over 50%, rated their attitude as being that of indifference, dislike or great dislike (see Appendix A, Form A p.3.) This seems only logical that they disliked that which they did not understand. But, of those same 392, less than half said their academic standing was poor or failing.

This same kind of discrepancy can be found in the figures for Conflict with teacher. Of the 261 who gave this as a reason for withdrawal, only 154 responded that their relationship with their teachers was one of three possibilities: The relationship was poor; I wasn't there long enough to judge; There was no relationship at all.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What kind of student withdraws?

Certain characteristics cannot be deemed as being significant indicators of students who withdraw. Two of these characteristics are sex and age. A third is the stident's status, whether he is part-time or full-time.

When do students withdraw?

Withdrawal rates are related to certain dates on the college calendar. There is a great deal of course-changing during change of elections. The next peak comes during the mid-term week, which is the last week students can withdraw without penalty. The next peak comes during the last week they can officially withdraw from courses.

The only recommendation that can be made at this time concerns dates of registration. These dates need to be studied to prevent students from registering before they have been thoroughly counseled. Returning students also need to know prior to registration that they have or have not successfully completed prerequisites.

Is there any significance between ACT or SCAT-COOP scores and withdrawals?

According to the mean scores, no relationship is suggested. The scores do begin to indicate that students do not necessarily withdraw because they lack the ability to succeed academically. Indeed, generally, the scores suggest that many of the students who withdraw could actually succeed in the courses from which they withdraw.

Much more sophisticated and thorough examination of these tests, especially the ACT, needs to be done immediately. Since the college uses the scores as indicators for entrance into a course or program, it would seem logical to find out if these test scores can be even better indicators of withdrawal.

Are some courses withdrawn from more than others?

Obviously, those courses and departments that serve a large number of students have more students withdrawing from them. Of course, this does not mean that these courses or departments are less successful or doing their jobs less effectively than others. What is important is the withdrawal rate of each course or department. As shown in the table, there is a large range but no department or course seems to stand out.

It is recommended to those departments that do serve large numbers of students in certain courses, that they use the information the researcher has in his office to begin to build profiles of students who most frequently withdraw from their courses.

Why do students withdraw from courses?

The study shows that a student often withdraws for more than one reason. This is multiple causation. The reasons may be personal or academic, but the different categories of reasons often become intertwined. Some of those who said they withdrew because of academic difficulty ranked themselves as doing average work or better in the class. It may be that they have a difficult time admitting to themselves that they are failing. It may also suggest disagreement with the teachers' judgments. This kind of discrepancy is also suggested by the number of students who said they withdrew because of a conflict with the teacher, yet rated their relationship with teachers rather high. This, of course, may be a question of not being able to respond honestly in interpersonal relationships. All of this taken together points out attitudinal problems related to college experience. This is what all of the data points to. This accounts for certain characteristics not being relevant, it accounts for the mean scores being relatively high, and it also accounts for multiple causation as well as discrepancies between reasons for withdrawal and other related factors.

This conclusion calls for more than one recommendation. We need to identify students who withdraw before they withdraw. This can only be done by follow-up studies that will find the more specific characteristics of students who withdraw. This study also needs to be an ongoing study. This is a full-time job for several people. Probably part of this work can and should be done through the individual departments and/or areas.

Changes in the counseling area also need to take place. Realistically much of this work should probably be done by this area. In order for this to occur the college needs people specifically trained to cope with the kinds of problems suggested by conflict in attitudes. This may mean the hiring of more professional staff. It may also mean freeing some of present staff of tasks they now have so that they may work with these students.

MACOMB COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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APPENDIX A
FORM A

Dear Sutdent:

Macomb County Community College is presently conducting a study to find out why students drop courses. From this study the college hopes to begin to find ways that will allow more students to complete the courses they enroll in.

To do this study, the college needs your assistance. Would you complete the enclosed questionnaires and return them in the self-addressed stamped envelope? Please mail them as soon as possible.

Since the study is designed to look at groups of students rather than individual students, would you please respond as frankly as possible. The information gained from the questionnaires will not become part of your record and the information will be treated with the utmost confidence. This is why we have used only your social security number rather than your name. This number will be used only for coding purposes and will not identify you in any way.

If you have any questions about the questionnaires, please call 772-8000, ext. 270.

DIRECTIONS

Our records show that you have dropped the following course:

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ (1-9) _____

_ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ /(10-13) was the date of your withdrawal from the course.

_ (14) number of courses dropped.

Enclosed you will find one questionnaire for each course you dropped. Answer the questions for each course on the appropriate questionnaire. You will notice that there are boxes adjacent to each question. In general, the number of boxes for each question is indicative of the number of digits requested for that question. In most cases you will need to print only one number; if this is the case the directions for doing so are in parentheses after each question. In some cases you will have several choices. Pick the response that best fits your attitude. Also, in items where a number of choices are available, please read all items before printing your answer. Please disregard the numbers in parentheses in front of each question number.

(15-23) 1. What is your social security number?

(24) 2. What is your sex? Print 1 if you are male. Print 2 if you are female.

(25-26) 3. What was your age as of your last birthday?

(27) 4. At the time of your withdrawal, were you a full time or a part time student? Print 1 if you were full time. Print 2 if you were part time.

(28-29)
(30-31)
(32-33)
(34-35) 5. Below, you will find 17 possible reasons for withdrawing from a course or program. Read all of them and then list at the left the numbers of those reasons that influenced your decision to withdraw; list them in order of importance, starting with the most important and ending with the least important. (NOTE: There is space for 4 reasons; do not feel, however, that you must state 4 reasons. You may have had only 3 or 2 or 1.)

01 Physical illness.
02 Physical disability.
03 Mental illness.
04 Section was cancelled.
05 Conflict with teacher.
06 The time of at least two classes overlapped.
07 Wrong program (it didn't suit your needs, abilities, or goals).
08 Dislike of school experience.
09 Moved.
10 Parental influence.
11 Family problem (if you are a married student).
12 Job conflict.
13 Military
14 Academic difficulty.
15 Financial problem.
16 Lack of interest in subject.
17 Hadn't satisfactorily completed the course or courses required for this course.

(36-39) 6. What time of day did the class meet? (Notice that you have two boxes then a colon and then two more boxes. If your class started at 10:00, you would fill in the boxes in the following manner: 1 0 : 0 0 If your class started at 9:30, you would fill in the boxes in the following manner: 9 : 3 0 This question is not applicable if you dropped more than two courses.)

(40) 7, What was your attitude towards the course or program? Print in the box the number of the response that is most accurate for you.

1 I like it very much.
2 I liked it.
3 I was indifferent about it.
4 I disliked it.
5 I disliked it very much.

8. On what days did the class meet? (Place a check in the appropriate boxes. You will probably need to check more than one. This question is not applicable if you dropped more than two courses.)

(41) Monday

(42) Tuesday

(43) Wednesday

(44) Thursday

(45) Friday

(46) Saturday

(47) 9. Did the course meet in the A.M. or P.M.? Print 1 if it was in the A.M. Print 2 if it was in the P.M. (This question is not applicable if you dropped more than 2 courses.)

(48) 10. At the time you left the course or program, what was your academic standing? Print in the box the number of the response that is most accurate for you.

1 I was doing superior work.
2 I was doing above average work.
3 I was doing average work.
4 I was doing poor work.
5 I was doing failing work.
6

(49) 11. How would you rate your relationship with your teacher or teachers? Print in the box the number of the response that is most accurate for you.

1 The relationship was excellent.
2 The relationship was good.
3 The relationship was fair.
4 The relationship was poor.
5. I wasn't there long enough to judge.
6. There was no relationship at all.

(50) 12. Have you taken this course before? Print 1 if you have. Print 2 if you have not. (This question is not applicable if you dropped more than two courses.)

(51) 13. If you have taken this course before, how many times have you taken it (including the last time)? This question is not applicable if you dropped more than two courses.

(52) 14. Was this a required course, either for your program or your degree? Print 1 if the answer is yes. Print 2 if the answer is no.

(53) 15. Has this experience caused you to change your program? Print 1 if the answer is yes. Print 2 if the answer is no.

(54) 16. Has this experience caused you to change your occupational objectives? Print 1 if the answer is yes. Print 2 if the answer is no.

(55) 17. Has this experience caused you to quit your formal education?

Yes, permanently. Print 1 if this is your response.
Yes, temporarily. Print 2 if this is your response.
No. Print 3 if this is your response.

__ (56) Kind of test: 1 if SCAT and COOP. 2 if ACT.

SCAT

__ __ (57-58) Ver.
__ __ (59-60) Qua.
__ __ (61-62) Total 1

COOP

__ __ (63-64) Voc.
__ __ (65-66) Speed
__ __ (67-68) Exp.
__ __ (69-70) Total 2

ACT

__ __ (71-72) Eng.
__ __ (73-74) Math
__ __ (75-76) Soc. Sci.
__ __ (77-78) Nat. Sci.
__ __ (79-80) Composite

APPENDIX C

1. How many responded to each item?
2. How many students returned questionnaires?
3. Frequency of number of courses dropped.
4. Frequency of males and females.
5. Frequency of ages.
6. Frequency of part-time and full-time students.
7. Frequency of each course dropped.
8. Frequency of dates of drops.
9. Frequency of dates of drops by course.
10. Frequency of responses to item (28-29)
11. Frequency of responses to item (30-31).
12. Frequency of responses to item (32-33).
13. Frequency of responses to item (34-35).
14. Frequency of drops between January 1 and February 12.
15. Frequency of drops between February 13 and April 26.
16. Frequency of drops between April 27 and May 24.
17. Compare responses to 40 and dates and courses, and test scores.
18. Frequency of responses to 47 compared to 36-39.
19. Frequency of responses to 48 compared to 10-13.
20. Frequency of responses to 49 compared to 10-13.
21. Frequency of responses to 50.
22. Frequency of responses to 51.
23. Frequency of responses to 52.
24. Frequency of responses to 53.
25. Frequency of responses to 54.
26. Frequency of responses to 55.
27. Frequency of responses to 56,
28. Compare responses to 40, 48, 49 of each student to each student's reasons for dropping.